

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated September 10, 2007. Claims 20-24, 26, 27, and 30-37 are pending in the application. Claims 34, 36, and 37 are objected to. Claims 20-24, 26, 27, and 30-33 are rejected. Claim 21 has been canceled. Claims 20, 22 and 34 have been amended. Claim 36 has also been amended to correct antecedent basis. Claim 38 has been added. Support for the amendment can be found on at least page 16, lines 1-3. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims is requested.

Claim 34 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 34 has been rewritten to include the limitations of claim 20. Thus, claim 34 should now be in condition for allowance.

Claims 20-24, 26-27, and 30-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ross (5,089,015) in view of Williamson IV et al. (6,402,780).

The Examiner previously objected to claim 21 in the Office Action dated December 12, 2006, and indicated that claim 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Claim 20 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 21 where the prosthesis further comprises a reinforcement attached to the inner surface of one of the commissure supports, and that the reinforcement has apertures for insertion of the fastener, language previously in claim 21, but which was inadvertently omitted in the Amendment mailed July 23, 2007. Thus, claim 20 is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner also previously objected to claim 22 in the Office Action dated December 12, 2006, and indicated that claim 22 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Claim 22 has been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of claims 20 and 21. Claim 22 is in condition for allowance.

Neither Ross nor Williamson disclose a reinforcement attached to the inner surface of the commissure supports, with the reinforcements having apertures for insertion of the fastener. Since neither Ross nor Williamson teach a reinforcement attached to the inner surface of the commissure supports, with the reinforcements having apertures for insertion of the fastener, the combined teachings of Ross and Williamson do not render Applicant's claimed invention prima facie obvious. Thus, claim 20, and the claims that depend from claim 20, should now be allowable. Claim 22 should also now be allowable. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 20-24, 26, 27, and 30-33 as being unpatentable over Ross in view of Williamson.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned representative if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

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